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中国在大湄公河次区域合作中的作用

China's Role In The Greater Mekong Sub-Region (GMS)

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摘要

湄公河发源于西藏，流经中国云南，一路向南流入南海。湄公河流域包括中国、缅甸、老挝、泰国、柬埔寨和越南。其中，缅甸、老挝、柬埔寨和越南是该区域经济发展水平较低的国家。中国在大湄公河次区域经济合作的积极作用，不仅有助于推动大湄公河次区域的合作发展，也有助于中国西部大开发。早在 20 世纪 90 年代初，云南和广西即已被纳入该发展规划。

此外，中国日益融入大湄公河次区域经济合作的进程表明中国对近邻与发展中国家的外交政策日益成熟。中国避开政治渠道，运用经济手段和秉持互不干涉内政政策，成功的推进了中国与大湄公河次区域国家间的关系。到目前为止，该项政策成果显著，平息了东盟国家对中国崛起的恐惧，同非洲建立了新的同盟伙伴关系，与中亚和大湄公河次区域的敌对国家关系缓解。同时，中国通过此举再度表明中国和平崛起的理念，更为重要的是，为中国经济发展提供了和平和稳定的周边环境。

本文在分析推动中国和湄公河次区域国家经济合作发展主要因素的基础上，指出政治上的敌对对湄公河次区域的发展具有正反两方面的影响。

关键词：中国影响；发展；合作；大湄公河次区域行为体；

ABSTRACT

The Mekong River originates in Tibet and flows through the Chinese province of Yunnan before continuing on a long southward journey ending in the South China Sea. In the course of this southern journey, the extensive Mekong Basin touches the territories of six countries: China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam. However, four of these countries – Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam – are the poorest in the region due to their economic situations. China's active role in the GMS can bring the development to the GMS as well as could also benefit China's western development programme. Both Yunnan and Guangxi have been included in the programme since it was introduced in the early 1990s.

Moreover, China's growing participation in the GMS is clearly another example of the growing sophistication of Beijing's foreign policy with its immediate neighbours as well as developing countries. Rather than political means, China's incorporation of economic incentives and policy of non-interference are proving to be more successful in forging closer ties with the five GMS countries. So far, this strategy has proven its worth as Beijing has quelled fears of its ASEAN neighbours on its economic rise, gained new allies in Africa, and established closer ties with previously hostile neighbours in Central Asia and now the Greater Mekong Sub-region. This in turn allowed China to demonstrate its "peaceful rise", and more importantly, helped secure peace and harmony in its backyard by bringing growth and prosperity to neighbouring countries.

In addition, this study also examines the main factors that motivated China and other important players to commit themselves to moving economic development forward the sub-region. This thesis concludes that the political rivalries have had the most positive and negative influences on the development of the Mekong subregion.

Key Words: China's Role, Development, Cooperation, Important players in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region (GMS)

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND

The Mekong River is one of the world's most important rivers originating in south-eastern Himalaya Mountains of China's Tibetan region and flowing through the Chinese province of Yunnan before continuing on its long southward journey terminating in the South China Sea. Mekong River has a length of approximately from 4200 km to 4889 km. It has annual discharge of 475 billion cubic meters. For nearly half of its length, Mekong River flows through Yunnan Province then crosses the "Golden Triangle" region, where it forms the border between Myanmar and Laos, and then a border between Laos and Thailand. The river then flows into Cambodia and Vietnam before ending in the South China Sea.

Mekong River not only creates the borders among the riparian countries but also construct a subregion which share many interests especially in transboundary water resource, economic relations, and other social and cultural exchanges. There are about 73 million people living along the river and this number will reach approximately 120 million by 2025¹. About 85 per cent of the river basin inhabitants rely on the river for their livelihood such as fishing, rice production, crops production, and other social daily life support. Besides, the land along the Mekong sub-region yields timber, minerals, coal, and petroleum and with water itself, the Mekong River supports agriculture, fisheries, and produces energy for hydropower. Despite these vast natural resources, the majority of the people living in the Basin still remain poor and their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita is the lowest amongst the Southeast Asian countries. The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) is defined according to the flow of the Mekong River.

The Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) thus includes Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and the south-western Chinese province of Yunnan. The region covers an area of almost 2.3 million square kilometers with a population of about 266 million. When people speak these days about the Greater Mekong Sub-region, they usually talk in terms of developing the area, building roads and bridges, laying railway lines, constructing dams and hydroelectric plants,

¹ Kristensen, J. (2001b). Making best use of the Mekong poses a huge challenge, Bangkok Post 21 May 2001

stringing transmission lines, protecting the environment, promoting tourism, preserving community life. Very rarely is the security dimension of the developments in the sub-region brought up. People generally do not take it into account and often ignore it.

This was not the case until fairly recently. In the era of strife in mainland Southeast Asia that followed the end of the Second World War, the potential for the security and political stability, as well for the development, of the Mekong sub-region was prominent in the minds of international policy-makers, much more than it is today. Even while war ravaged the sub-region, starting as early as the 1950s, international efforts were being undertaken to develop the Mekong Basin as a basic way of paving the way for peace.

The Mekong sub-regional development is influenced by both state and non-state actors such as China, Japan and non-state actor for example the Asian Development Bank (ADB) who's stated aim is to assist the economic development of the sub-region. In 1992, the ADB created the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) economic development program initiated to improve the life of the impoverished people in the sub-region by contributing the improvement of infrastructure to facilitate the development and distribution of the resource base, as well as advancing freer flow of goods to the people in the subregion (Ishida, 2005: 1). The Technical Assistance (TA) and general direction of developing the sub-region from the ADB has mostly met the needs of the Chinese government and their want to develop the sub-regional economic cooperation. In return, China has been able to develop their most underdeveloped areas in an economic sense. In the political sense, China has been partially able to influence to the entire ASEAN member countries. These are the reasons to why the Chinese government has been so actively involved in the GMS program. Yet, these benefits have not been satisfactory enough. China, as a regional super power, has aimed to compete with Japan, another regional super economic power. So, China has supported ASEAN's programs and thus created its own program to sustain the development of the Mekong sub-region. Consequently, the study argues that it is understandable that this rivalry over regional economic leadership may certainly push China to remain an important player in the development of the Mekong sub-region.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the 1990s, states in the East Asian region have articulated a strategic vision for Mekong sub-region economic development. The lack of economic development must be dealt with in order to meet the spirit of region economic integration and cooperation. With regard to this a discussion on the economic, environmental, and political literature related to the Mekong sub-region between the 1990s and the first decade of the new millennium is given. This review will not argue methodological approaches, but rather attempt to summarize major findings, both supporting and opposing concerning over the Mekong subregion development.

There several of the studies related to the politics of the Mekong region tend to concentrate on the economic conditions of the Mekong countries and the economic impact of diverse cooperative projects on them (Mya, 1997; Humphries, 2000; Houn and Chanto, 2001; and Krongkaew, 2004). Ishida's (2005 and 2007) views regarding the fact that the economic corridor project is better than other flagship projects under the GMS program. In connection, Ishida (2009) offers suggestions for areas within each of the CLMV countries suitable for the SEZs. He aimed those candidates to be placed into the economic corridor project. A second group of studies discussed in the literature above scrutinizes the management of the Mekong River as a whole and environmental protection specifically (MacQuarrie, Viriyasakultorn, and Wolf, 2008: 175-184; Sneddon and Fox, 2006; Ratner, 2003; Dore, 2003; and Lebal, Garden, and Imamura, 2005). For the management of the Mekong River, MacQuarrie, Viriyasakultorn, Wolf, Sneddon, Fox, Ratner, and Dore suggested that civil actors and civil society should engage with the governments of the countries along the Mekong River. On the other hand, Lebal, Garden, and Imamura points out the importance of type of effective water governance.

Last but not least, Dosch and Hensengerth (2000), Making (2000), and Schmeier (2009) emphasized political security dimensions in the Mekong subregion. On the other hand, Onishi (2005) focused on China's strategy related to the downstream Mekong countries and its dam building policy.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

As a student of international relations, it is very important to understand the relationship between one state to another state, and the relationships among the regional governments. Students should also know inter and intra cooperation, social relation and state action. It is better to know other social structure for example, economy, culture, domestic politics and geographical and historical influences to regional as well as the new superpower country in the world stage such as China. The focus of research is on issues relating to the security and stability of the East Asia region and their implications for China and other countries in the region. Since the end of the Cold War, states in the East Asian region have been launched many programs and projects to improve the economic condition of the Mekong sub-region. Simultaneously, China and Japan have competed with one another through the ADB's "GMS" programs to further their economic and political interests. In this thesis, there are five objectives which are as followed:

- The first objective is to raise awareness, knowledge and understanding of the Mekong sub-region
- The second objective is explore The Role of China And other important Actors in the Development of The GMS
- The Third objective is to explore the policies and measures that China has implemented in order to support the development of the Mekong sub-region.
- The fourth objective is to analyze the influence of rivalries in the East Asian region upon development in the Mekong sub-region.
- The Final objective is to explore the responses of Japan to China growing influence in the GMS.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve this objective, I have to conduct a lot of researches and critical analysis of the existing literature on the subject. There are two sources of data have been explored. The two sources are the “Primary” and “Secondary”, as will be stated follow:

4.1. PRIMARY SOURCES:

There are two primary sources to be used. They are:

1. Interviews in China with Chinese Scholars and other Scholars from GMS countries.
2. Collected primary evidence ranging from official documents to relevant statistics as well as leaders' statements from each government of the Mekong countries through their respective websites such as the reports from China's Foreign Ministry, Commerce Ministry, National Development and Reform Commission.

4.2. SECONDARY SOURCES:

The secondary data sources will be collected from libraries, e-journals, Internet, books, book chapters, journals and official reports or documents related to the development of the Mekong sub-region, and newspapers especially People's daily, Nikkei Telecom, The Nation (Thailand), DAP (Cambodia), Xinhua news agency and China daily.

China's Role in the Greater Mekong Subregion



CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION

CHAPTER II: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION

1. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE GMS

After WWII, The Economic Commission on Asia and Far East (ECAFE), created in 1947, provided some development projects on the Mekong River in 1956. One year later the Mekong Committee was established. The committee had function to give financial and technical support to the development projects, including dam construction generating hydropower. This committee only consisted of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and South Vietnam because People Republic of China was not yet internationally recognized and Burma was reluctant to join the committee. The committee lasted from 1957 to 1975.

The Mekong Committee could not realize its vision of large, multipurpose dams on the lower Mekong River. In 1960s only a small number of hydropower dams were constructed in Vietnam, Laos and Thailand. However, the committee did a great job in producing a strategic management of the water resource. Extensive data on basin hydrology, geology, engineering studies, as well as social and economic aspects of water resources were gathered and disseminated. The committee had only interim status from 1978 to 1995 when Cambodia was absent from 1978 due to its civil war. The Interim Mekong Committee continued its work on hydrologic data gathering, water quality sampling, and flood forecasting and warning. The most important outcome of the studies is the publication of the 1987 Indicative Basin Plan. This plan made quite substantial changes in water resources management paradigms and approaches, such as new emphases on environment and resettlement².

In 1990s, the end of the cold war led to stronger cooperation in the region. The subregion has received funding from ADB and World Bank, EU, and other donor organizations. In 1992, ADB proposed Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program (GMS). In April 1995, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam signed an agreement on 'The cooperation for the

² Jacobs, Jeffrey (2002). The Mekong River Commission: transboundary water resources planning and regional security. *The Geographical Journal*, Vo.168, No.4, December 2002, pp.354-364

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